

(D) The court finds that exceptional circumstances exist justifying waiver of the former spouse's consent.

(iv) *Approval of a waiver.* If OPM grants a waiver of the requirement of paragraph (a) of this section, OPM will notify both the individual and the employing office of its decision. OPM's notice to the employing office is deemed to complete the individual's election, which becomes effective with the first pay period after the employing office receives OPM's notice that the waiver is granted.

(2) *Extension of the time limit to obtain a former spouse's consent—*(i) *First request.* If an employee who is ineligible to elect FERS coverage solely because of a qualifying court order files, prior to January 1, 1999, a completed SF 3111, Request for Waiver, Extension or Search, requesting an extension of the time limit to seek an amendment of a qualifying court order, OPM is deemed to have approved the extension through June 30, 1999.

(ii) *Second request.* OPM will grant one extension of the time limit to seek an amendment of a qualifying court order to an individual who has been granted an extension under paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section if the individual—

(A) Files an application for the extension (SF 3109) with the employing office before July 1, 1999;

(B) Has initiated legal proceedings to secure the modification of the qualifying court order on file at OPM to satisfy the former spouse consent requirement;

(C) Demonstrates to OPM's satisfaction that the individual has exercised due diligence in seeking to obtain the modification; and

(D) If seeking an extension beyond December 31, 1999, demonstrates to OPM's satisfaction that a longer extension is necessary.

(iii) *Expiration date of a second extension.* An approved extension under paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section expires on December 31, 1999, unless OPM's decision letter states a later expiration date.

(3) *Search for a qualifying court order.* (i) When an employing office notifies OPM that it has received an employee's request for a determination of whether

OPM has a qualifying court order on file, OPM will determine whether it has such an order.

(ii) If OPM does not have a copy of a qualifying court order in its possession, OPM's notice to the employing office that it has no qualifying court order completes the employee's election of FERS coverage and the election becomes effective at the beginning of the first pay period after the employing office receives OPM's notification.

(iii) If OPM has a copy of a qualifying court order, OPM will notify both the individual and the employing office that it has a qualifying court order and that an extension until June 30, 1999, has been granted.

§ 846.723 Agency responsibilities.

(a) The employing office must determine whether the employee is eligible to elect FERS coverage.

(b)(1) As close as practicable to the beginning of the open enrollment period, the employing office must provide each employee eligible to elect FERS coverage with notice of that employee's right to make an election.

(2) The employing office must provide each employee eligible to elect FERS coverage with a copy of or ready access to the FERS Transfer Handbook.

(c) An election received by an employing office before July 1, 1998, is deemed to have been received by the employing office on July 1, 1998.

(d) An agency decision that an employee is not eligible to elect FERS coverage or refusing to accept a belated election under § 846.724 must be in writing, must fully set forth the findings and conclusions of the agency, and must notify the employee of the right to appeal the decision under this section to the Merit Systems Protection Board, including all information required under the Board's regulations. See 5 CFR 1201.21.

§ 846.724 Belated elections and correction of administrative errors.

(a) *Belated elections.* The employing office may accept a belated election of FERS coverage if it determines that—

(1) The employing office did not provide adequate notice to the employee in a timely manner;

(2) The agency did not provide access to the FERS Transfer Handbook to the employee in a timely manner; or

(3) The employee was unable, for cause beyond his or her control, to elect FERS coverage within the prescribed time limit.

(b) *Correction of administrative errors.* Failure to begin employee deductions and Government contributions on the effective date of coverage must be corrected in accordance with §841.505 of this chapter.

§ 846.725 Appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

(a) A person whose rights or interests under this part are affected by an agency decision that an employee is not eligible to elect FERS coverage or an agency refusal to accept a belated election under §846.724, or an OPM decision denying an extension or waiver under §846.722, may request the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) to review such decision in accord with procedures prescribed by MSPB. MSPB regulations relating to appeals are contained in chapter II of this title.

(b) Paragraph (a) of this section is the exclusive remedy for review of agency decisions concerning eligibility to make an election under this subpart. An agency decision must not allow review under any employee grievance procedures, including those established by chapter 71 of title 5, United States Code, and 5 CFR part 771.

§ 846.726 Delegation of authority to act as OPM's agent for receipt of employee communications relating to elections.

The employing office is delegated authority to act as OPM's agent for the receipt of any documents that employees are required by this subpart to file with OPM. Such documents are deemed received by OPM on the date that the employing office receives them.

PART 847—ELECTIONS OF RETIREMENT COVERAGE BY CURRENT AND FORMER EMPLOYEES OF NONAPPROPRIATED FUND INSTRUMENTALITIES

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